

Kukuya language

The **Kukuya language**, *Kikukuya* [kìkỳkç̣yā], also transcribed **Kukw̃a** and known as **Southern Teke**, is a member of the Teke dialect continuum of the Congolese plateau. It is known for being the only language claimed to have a phonemic labiodental nasal /ɱ/. The name comes from the word *kuya* "plateau".

Contents
Phonology <div>The labiodental nasal</div>
Notes
References

Phonology

The five vowels are /i e~ɛ a o~ɔ u/, which may be long (double) or short. Other vowel sequences do not occur. /u/ is realised as [y] in the environment /ɲuni/ ([ɲyni]) and also before [j] or another [y], as in the name *Kukuya* [kỳkç̣yā].

Kukuya	
Southern Teke	
Native to	Republic of the Congo
Region	Plateaux Department
Native speakers	39,000 (2000) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Benue–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Southern Bantoid<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bantu (Zone B)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teke (B.70)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kukuya</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	kkw
Glottolog	teke1280 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/teke1280) ^[2]
Guthrie code	B.77a ^[3]

Consonant phonemes

		<u>Bilabial</u>		<u>Labio-Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>		<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Nasal</u>		m		ɱ	n		ɲ	ŋ	
<u>Plosive</u>	<u>Prenasalized</u>	mp ^h	mb		nt ^h	nd		ŋk ^h	ŋg
	<u>Plain</u>	p	b		t	d		k~g	
<u>Affricate</u>	<u>Prenasalized</u>			ɱp ^{fh}	ɱb ^{ɸv}	nts ^h	ndz		
	<u>Plain</u>			p ^f	b ^{ɸv}	ts	dz		
<u>Fricative</u>				f		s	z~j		(h)
<u>Approximant</u>						l		w	

Prenasalized voiceless consonants are aspirated. Depending on speaker and region, the sound represented by ⟨y⟩ may be either [j] or [z], apart from the word "with", which is always [jà]. The labiodental nasal is realized as [ɱ^w] before /a/ and as [ɱ] before /i/ and /e/; Paulian (1975) suggests that this is due to a conflict between labialization and the spread front vowels. The velar stop is [k] word initially and typically [g] between vowels; there is a similar alternation with [t] and [ɾ]. /mpf/, /ɱ^w/, /n/ and especially /d/ are uncommon. /h/ is found in a single highly frequent word, /hé/ ('also').

Cw sequences are rare and only occur before unrounded vowels; they include /tw/ [tɕɥ], /sw/ [ɕɥ], /ndzw/ [ndʒɥ], /jw/ [ʒɥ], /kw/ [kɥ]. (C cannot be /f, l/.) It may be possible that the frequent sounds [pf, bv, ɱ^w] (which occur before /i a u, i e a u, i e a/, respectively) are phonemically /pw, bw, mw/, but Paulian (1975) argues against this analysis. Cj sequences such as /pj, kj/ are also rare (a dozen cases) and only occur before /a/. It may be possible that the frequent sounds [ts, dz, ɲ] are phonemically /tj, dj, nj/, but they are not restricted as to following vowels and Paulian (1975) argues against this analysis. Diachronically, Kukwa affricates derive from stops before close vowels or vowel sequences, and /pf/ derives from *k rather than *p. The labiodentals are not found before /o/. /n/ is not attested before /u/, and /ɲ/ is not found in underived words before /i, u/.

Prenasalized affricates are generally transcribed *mf*, *mv*, *ns*, *nz*. Phonemic neutralization may occur when consonants are prenasalized:

N + /p, w/ → /mp/
 N + /pf, f/ → /ɱpf/ ("mf")
 N + /d, l/ → /nd/
 N + /ts, s/ → /nts/ ("ns")
 N + /dz, j/ → /ndz/ ("nz")

Syllables are primarily CV, with some CwV and CjV; vowel-initial syllables do not occur. Roots (not counting nominal prefixes and the like) are of the forms CV, CVV, CVCV, CVVCV, and CVCVCV. In the latter case, the middle vowel is neutralized. There are only six medial consonants, /k [g], t [ɾ], n, m, l, p [b]/, and six combinations of medial C₂C₃ in the case of CVCVCV words, /-n-m, -t-p, -t-k, -l-p, -l-k, ?/.

Paulian (1975) posits both tone and stress, with tone being high or low, though not every syllable is assigned a tone: there are five word-tone patterns in the language. Vowels may carry two tones to accomplish this.

The labiodental nasal

A phonemic labiodental nasal, /ɱ/, has only been reported from this one language. It is "accompanied by strong protrusion of both lips", being [ɱ^w] before /a/ and [ɱ] before /i/ and /e/, perhaps because labialization is constrained by the spread front vowels; it does not occur before back (rounded) vowels.^[4] However, there is some doubt that a true stop can be made by this gesture due to gaps between the incisors, which are filed to points by the Teke people and would allow air to flow during the occlusion;^[5] this is particularly pertinent considering that one of the words with this consonant, /ɱjáá/, means a 'gap between filed incisors'.^[6] Because of these factors, Teke /ɱ/ might be better characterized as a labiodental nasal approximant ([ʋ̹] in IPA), rather than a nasal occlusive.

Given its rarity, it is worth providing some minimal pairs with other consonants:

ɱî eyes, mî urine, pîí small opening
 kî-mààlà to complete the rest, kî-ɱààlà to laugh at
 ɱé they (class 4), bvé they (class 8), fè bulb, mfê the cold
 kî-ɱànàmà to rejoice, kî-bvànàmà to shake with fear

ṁáá gap between filed incisors, *mbváá* interval
ṁáànà baby, *mà-mbvàànì* to meet

Notes

1. Kukuya (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/kkw/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Teke-Kukuya" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/teke1280>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf>)
4. Paulian (1975:57)
5. Ladefoged & Maddieson (1996:18)
6. Paulian (1975:40)

References

- Ladefoged, Peter; Maddieson, Ian (1996). *The Sounds of the World's Languages*. Oxford: Blackwell. ISBN 978-0-631-19815-4.
- Paulian, Christiane (1975), *Le kukuya, langue teke du Congo: phonologie, classes nominales*, Peeters Publishers, ISBN 2-85297-008-2

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kukuya_language&oldid=951968768"

This page was last edited on 19 April 2020, at 22:00 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.